



Michael F. Easley
Governor

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William G. Ross Jr.
Secretary, DENR

28 LOCAL PROJECTS GET GRANTS

By CHARLIE PEEK
Public Information Officer

The Parks and Recreation Authority awarded grants for recreation projects in 28 communities at its quarterly meeting May 13.

However, emergency budget measures that shrank the available pool of money in the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) left a considerable number of local governments disappointed. There were 61 grant applications, and 26 of those had asked for the grant limit of \$250,000 — or very close to it. PARTF grants require equal matching funds from the grantees.

Authority Chairman Jonathan Howes said, "As we read through these applications, we can't help but be impressed with the vigor with which these grants are sought and the importance of parks and recreation throughout the state."

The authority found

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A BOAT TOUR OF LAKE JOCASSEE GAVE VISITORS A RARE GLIMPSE OF THE SOUTHERN REACHES OF GORGES STATE PARK.

GORGES GIVES THANKS TO THOSE WHO HELPED

By CHARLIE PEEK
Public Information Officer

It takes the talents of a lot of people to create a new state park. And, Gorges State Park did its best to thank them all at an Appreciation Day event May 4.

The centerpiece of the weekend was a barbeque dinner at the park on Saturday evening. After Superintendent Steve Pagano introduced his staff, he told the crowd,

"There's us, and then there's all of you who have helped us get this far."

Earlier in the day, Pagano and his staff had conducted driving tours and guided short hikes into the park and had made experts on geology and biology available to explain significant features in the 7,092-acre tract in the Jocassee gorges that was acquired in 1999 from Duke Power Company.

On Sunday, visitors were

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From The Director's Desk

Dear Fellow Employees,

As you could tell from my letter to our employees sent out late last month, this is not a good time for parks and recreation or any other program in North Carolina state government. Most projections anticipate another significant budget deficit this year – perhaps even greater than last year – and the division can expect our share of the necessary reductions. We have been given a reduction target of \$1.4 million for the 2002-03 fiscal year. The severity of this reduction is compounded by the fact that we lost some of our budget flexibility when we went to a lease-purchase arrangement for our vehicles and major equipment items last year in another budget-saving measure. That means we no longer have the option of reducing our equipment budget (by as much as \$500,000 in past years) to help offset the expected reduction. As a result we are looking at the possibility of closing some parks and reducing the operations of other units a day or two a week - or possible closing of some areas of some parks. We'll know more about how we'll need to manage these areas after the General Assembly passes an appropriations bill and the Governor signs it and we know exactly how large the final reductions will be.

While things are looking pretty bleak, don't get too far down in the dumps. We do have several things going for us. In a recent speech, the Governor made a commitment to protecting the state's natural resources, DENR Secretary Bill Ross remains committed to the open space initiative and wants more parks - not fewer, and several members of the Natural and Economic Resources Subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee were unhappy with the option of closing parks as a cost-cutting measure. Hopefully, if the reductions are accepted, we will have support to resume normal operations as soon as possible and there is a remote possibility that the General Assembly will find a way to cover the shortfall without taking the entire \$1.4 million reduction currently scheduled

for the division.

So keep your heads up and continue providing the level of service our public has come to expect, and things will work out. There will be a bump or two in the road and it may take a while, but we'll get through this if you'll keep looking for the opportunities that have to be hiding in this chaos.

On a happier note, we recently had a celebration at Gorges State Park to say "thank you" to the many volunteers who have helped make the first two and a half years of the park's existence so successful. Superintendent Steve Pagano and the entire Gorges staff have worked hard to build a bond of mutual trust and friendship with local citizens and visitors and that relationship was demonstrated by the 150 local citizens who turned out in a chilly drizzle to enjoy barbeque and fellowship at the Appreciation Day. I regret that I wasn't able to attend the event after several months of anticipation. My thanks go not only to the park staff, but also to members of our planning and construction teams, natural resource folks and district representatives who've worked hard to make us a true member of the community in Transylvania County.

The Gorges experience has also reinforced my belief in the value of the park advisory committees in helping us bridge the gap between state government and local citizens. Members of the Gorges committee have not only offered invaluable help and guidance, but have become newfound friends. This is a classic example of the kind of groundwork that it takes to develop the broad base of support to help us get through the tough times that occur periodically in state government. My thanks to all involved!

Sincerely,

Phil

Philip K. McKnelly

UP CLOSE AND PERSONNEL

Andy Griffith, since 1998 a Maintenance Mechanic IV at Mount Jefferson State Natural Area, graduated with honors in May from Wilkes Community College with an associate arts degree in industrial maintenance technology. Griffith began his studies in August, 1998, and completed the

degree requirements in December. In 2001, he received the Ashe Campus Outstanding Student of the Year award. He joined the division after working with the NC Department of Corrections as a project leader with the B.R.I.D.G.E. program of the Division of Forest Resources.

MST HAS NEW ENDPOINT NEAR PARK

By TAMARA WARD
Publications Coordinator

Jockey's Ridge, the tallest active sand dune on the east coast, is the most visited attraction on the Outer Banks and is known worldwide. As Jockey's Ridge State Park Superintendent George Barnes boasts, "Everybody knows about Jockey's Ridge."

Now the dune can add one more bragging right to its list: A nearby stretch of trail was dedicated May 19, officially linking the dune trail to a highway outside the state park and increasing its accessibility as one of the endpoints of the state's Mountains-to-Sea Trail.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held at the park in conjunction with the annual meeting of Friends of Jockey's Ridge.

The Mountains-to-Sea Trail, when completed, will traverse the state, from the top of Jockey's Ridge to Clingman's Dome in Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Nearly 400 miles of what will be a more than 900-mile trail are complete.

The latest stretch of the trail at Jockey's Ridge is a 1,600-foot concrete walkway five feet wide, and it includes a wood bridge crossing a ditch. The trail segment links NC 158 and the park trail that leads to the top of the dune. The park also installed a pedestrian gate where the trail enters the park near the main park entrance.

Funding for the trail came from various sources, including a \$4,800 Adopt-A-Trail grant secured by Friends of Jockey's Ridge. Funds also came from the NC Parks and Recreation Trust Fund, and an additional grant from the Friends of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail is in the works.

The park had planned to hire a contractor for concrete on the trail, but after the estimate came back at a pricey \$32,500 the park decided to proceed on its own. By using park staff and inmates from the Tyrell County Inmate Community Work Program, the park saved \$17,000 in labor costs.

"Those guys really did a good job and I think they're proud of what they did," Barnes said of the inmate crew. "They really helped us considerably."

At the May 19 ceremony, Barnes; Darrell McBane, state trails coordinator; and Lewis Ledford, superintendent of state parks, offered remarks.

Ranger John Fullwood and prison guard William Davis, who coordinated inmate labor during the trail's construction, cut the ribbon.



WALKERS TRY OUT PART OF THE NEWEST MST LINK.

"John did a lot of the layout work," Barnes said. "He worked pretty hard on getting it done as well as did Bill Jones."

Jones is a maintenance mechanic at the park.

"This was a great conclusion to efforts to link the whole Cape Hatteras National Seashore through the town of Nags Head now into and ending on top of Jockey's Ridge," said McBane. "The trail was wonderfully done, woven through the maritime forest, delicately placed there. It's got a great feel."

Besides completing the eastern endpoint of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail, the trail will also provide pedestrian access to the park and to the beach. The Town of Nags Head is working on plans to install a sidewalk linking the trail to a beach access, which also is part of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail. Currently, hikers must walk through the town of Nags Head to reach the Jockey's Ridge walkway.

"All this ties together because we had been trying to figure out a way that people could enter the park by walking," Barnes said.

The trail also ties into the park's Environmental Education and Learning Experience, which is entitled "Tracks in the Sand" and focuses on animal track identification. While the concrete for the trail was being laid, Barnes said, a large black snake crossed the wet concrete, leaving its track behind. The park is considering installing a snake crossing sign to alert visitors to the preserved tracks.

McBane said that the next focus for the Mountains-to-Sea Trail will be to contract a group to plan the trail from Falls Lake State Recreation Area to Cedar Island, where ferry access to the barrier island segment of the trail is provided.

taken on a boat tour on Jocassee Lake in South Carolina to view the park's southern reaches. Officials of Duke Power provided the transportation.

Pagano often tells how he arrived in the crossroads community of Sapphire in June, 1999, just a couple months after the deed was transferred, with only a vehicle, a briefcase and marching orders to begin organizing North Carolina's westernmost state park.

The community welcomed him and other officials of the NC Division of Parks and Recreation, he said, and often opened credit accounts and extended help "on just the promise that a park would come together."

The staff presented a special award to Bill McNeely, a businessman who owns a quarry close to the park. McNeely, who now serves on the Gorges State Park Advisory Committee, was the best kind of neighbor in the mountain tradition, Pagano said, offering all types of help including an outright donation of gravel and fill dirt to help build the park's interim access road, a gift Pagano valued at about \$23,000.

Ranger Mike Lambert



SUPERINTENDENT STEVE PAGANO WELCOMES GUESTS TO BARBEQUE DINNER.

presented certificates of appreciation to the Rosman Unit of the Department of Transportation, which helped tie the park's entrance to NC 281; to the Carolina Mountain Club, which offered hundreds of hours of trail-building help; to the Hendersonville Unit of the Department of Corrections, which supplied a crew of inmates for one week each month; and to the businesses Our Country Store and the Lake Toxaway Company.

Lewis Ledford, Superintendent of State Parks, said that state government normally moves at a slow pace, but that from the beginning there was a commitment by the division to create the park as quickly as possible. The local community

helped make that happen, he said.

"It's always important to have the support of people who spell the word with a capital 'S,'" he said.

Pagano said that during the time that the staff was so busy in Transylvania County, division staffers in Raleigh helped keep things moving. "There are always people in the background you don't see. They just make things happen," he said.

He presented an award of appreciation – and a framed photograph of the park – to Robert Skinner, retired financial officer of the division. The park prepared similar awards for retired planner Alan Eakes and retired personnel officer Judy Warren, although they could not attend the May 4 event.

About 150 people attended the appreciation ceremony and included State Rep. Trudi Walend, who represents the 68th District in Transylvania County, members of the park advisory committee, officials of Duke Power Company and members of the Friends of State Parks.



DESPITE PERSISTENT RAIN, VISITORS MADE USE OF NEW TRAILS.

DIVISION AWARDS RALEIGH POLICE FOR HELP

The NC Division of Parks and Recreation presented an award of thanks to the Raleigh Police Department May 21 for its help in a 2001 undercover operation targeting illegal sexual activity in William B. Umstead State Park.

Director Phil McKnelly told Chief Jane Perlov of the department that the joint operation resulting in 14 arrests was an unqualified success in discouraging such activity in the park and could not have been accomplished without the police department's expertise and manpower.

Perlov accepted the award along with police officials Major John Kramer, Lt. Mike Reynolds and Lt. Tim Shermer, all of whom helped organize the operation.



CHIEF PERLOV ACCEPTS AWARD FROM MCKNELLY.

PART F

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

itself with \$4.96 million to allocate, including \$365,000 in unspent grant money that had been returned to the state from previously funded projects. That was down from about \$7.5 million that would have been available, had not a portion of the trust fund been diverted to help stem the state's budget shortfall in the current fiscal year.

Authority members, who are appointed to represent

different parts of the state, sought a broad geographical distribution of the money as they voted for grant awards and funded projects from Cherokee County in the west to Carolina Beach on the coast.

The projects included trails, nature centers, children's playgrounds, urban green spaces and a swimming pool.

The award recipients are: Elon in Alamance County; Rocky Mount in Edgecombe

County; Asheville in Buncombe County; Nashville in Nash County; Watauga County; Surf City in Pender County; Whitakers in Nash County; Oakboro in Stanly County; Concord in Cabarrus County; Wilmington in New Hanover County; Rowan County; Buncombe County; Alexander County; Guilford County; Greenville in Pitt County; Lincolnton in Lincoln County; Liberty in Randolph County; Currituck County; Durham County; Carolina Beach in New Hanover County; Surry County; Cherokee County; Grifton in Pitt County; Banner Elk in Avery County; Laurel Park in Henderson County; Mount Gilead in Montgomery County; and Princeville in Edgecombe County. Smithfield in Johnston County was awarded a partial grant of \$114,000 toward its \$250,000 request.

A few more of the local government projects are expected to be funded in July when the trust fund is replenished with fourth quarter receipts from the state's real estate deed stamp tax.



SLOWLY BUT SURELY

CHRISTMAS TREES SOAK UP THE SUN AND THE SAND AT HAMMOCKS BEACH STATE PARK IN AN ATTEMPT TO REBUILD DUNES SWEEP AWAY IN A SERIES OF HURRICANES THE PAST FEW YEARS. THE PROCESS WORKS WELL BUT TAKES A LONG TIME TO SHOW RESULTS.

VISITORS RISE TO FLY-FISHING CLASS

By TAMARA WARD
Publications Coordinator

The would-be fly fisherman stood at the edge of the upper pond at Occoneechee Mountain State Natural Area. A spring shower cooled the afternoon air, and the fisherman gingerly held the borrowed fly rod in one hand, fumbled with the fishing line in the other hand, shifted his stance in his knee-high rubber boots.

Never having fly-fished before, he wouldn't have believed that he would catch a crappie before the end of the program.

Introductory fly-fishing programs are regularly held at Eno River State Park. During these programs, Ranger Scott Crocker introduces park visitors to the basics of fly-fishing — how to stand and cast, how to select a fly rod, how to tie knots. He even shows visitors how to tie a fly and displays a sampling of the flies he has tied in the past.

"Some people may not have found something they



RANGER SCOTT CROCKER EXPLAINS FINER POINTS OF FLY-FISHING.

really enjoy doing outdoors," Crocker said. "A lot of times I get the chance to expose them to something new outdoors and kind of give them a passion to pursue. (The program) kind of gives them a reason to enjoy the outdoors and protect the outdoors."

When Crocker announced the first fly-fishing program at Eno River, he could

have signed up more than 50 people, he said.

"I was pretty impressed," Crocker said. "There's so much demand for it."

Crocker said he usually holds a fly-fishing program once a month, and typically the programs are full. Because participants use Crocker's personal rods to practice casting, and because so much individual attention is given to the participants, only four slots are available per program. Crocker said many types of people are drawn to the programs. Sometimes a parent will bring a child to the class, other times couples come together.

"It definitely gives me satisfaction," Crocker said. "Because I'm exposing (fly-fishing) to them for the first time, it's definitely a thrill."

Fly-fishing isn't the only program in demand at Eno River, Crocker said. Backcountry hikes, led by Ranger Adrienne Wallace, are also popular.



SOMETIMES THE HARDEST PART IS FINDING THE WATER WITH A FLY.

NORTH CAROLINA STATE PARKS MONTHLY ATTENDANCE REPORT APRIL 2002

PARK	APRIL 2002	TOTAL YTD APR. 2002	APRIL 2001	TOTAL YTD APR. 2001	% CHANGE (2001/2002)	
					APR.	YTD
BOONES CAVE	3,059	9,224	3,397	9,759	-10%	-5%
CAROLINA BEACH	19,898	56,036	24,040	57,982	-17%	-3%
CLIFFS OF THE NEUSE	10,050	27,818	11,592	26,655	-13%	4%
CROWDER'S MOUNTAIN	31,998	96,158	27,708	83,904	15%	15%
ENO RIVER	29,970	95,894	31,948	95,315	-6%	1%
OCCONEECHEE MOUNTAIN	3,570	10,668	3,472	12,002	3%	-11%
FALLS LAKE	88,643	162,127	71,086	174,444	25%	-7%
FORT FISHER	110,358	296,903	68,996	138,062	60%	115%
FORT MACON	120,150	312,736	132,404	292,488	-9%	7%
GOOSE CREEK	15,427	46,813	13,075	34,706	18%	35%
GORGES	10,753	28,982	6,753	20,896	59%	39%
HAMMOCKS BEACH	15,246	41,982	16,344	37,394	-7%	12%
HANGING ROCK	33,024	84,381	38,602	86,278	-14%	-2%
JOCKEY'S RIDGE	79,937	182,912	91,652	168,818	-13%	8%
JONES LAKE	7,148	21,156	10,444	27,964	-32%	-24%
JORDAN LAKE	156,857	317,052	140,544	296,580	12%	7%
KERR LAKE	176,384	368,512	116,344	258,728	52%	42%
LAKE JAMES	21,175	54,905	19,938	51,942	6%	6%
LAKE NORMAN	37,062	95,246	18,684	46,656	98%	104%
LAKE WACCAMAW	11,208	30,232	10,592	27,376	6%	10%
LUMBER RIVER	6,108	13,383	4,492	16,115	36%	-17%
MEDOC MOUNTAIN	4,556	12,712	6,560	16,160	-31%	-21%
MERCHANT'S MILLPOND	11,205	29,617	11,416	28,416	-2%	4%
MORROW MOUNTAIN	52,640	118,620	53,360	120,160	-1%	-1%
MOUNT JEFFERSON	7,076	20,842	6,876	19,988	3%	4%
MOUNT MITCHELL	35,163	60,129	31,446	48,391	12%	24%
NEW RIVER	7,600	27,480	8,020	20,824	-5%	32%
PETTIGREW	7,112	18,325	11,147	26,559	-36%	-31%
PILOT MOUNTAIN	35,309	100,892	40,051	102,339	-12%	-1%
RAVEN ROCK	13,502	37,408	13,687	37,421	-1%	0%
SINGLETERY LAKE	1,617	3,637	1,344	3,248	20%	12%
SOUTH MOUNTAINS	17,120	45,678	22,058	57,668	-22%	-21%
STONE MOUNTAIN	35,916	116,228	51,272	151,972	-30%	-24%
WEYMOUTH WOODS	3,250	9,872	2,439	8,252	33%	20%
WILLIAM B. UMSTEAD	38,912	127,727	31,755	104,322	23%	22%
SYSTEMWIDE TOTAL	1,259,003	3,082,287	1,153,538	2,709,784	9%	14%

BARBER WINS FISH TOURNEY . . . AGAIN

By RANGER STACY HINES
Falls Lake State Recreation Area

The sun was shining brightly and the temperature was just right on April 11 for the Falls Lake Annual Staff Crappie Tournament. The only complaint for that day was that it had been a bit windy.

All division employees and associates were invited to participate in the tournament for a small entrance fee, which went towards a cookout and for awards.

The tournament lasted from 9:30 a.m. to the weigh-in at 8 p.m. At the weigh-in, Floyd Barber (Falls Lake Maintenance Mechanic IV) won the pot for the biggest fish at one pound, five ounces, which came as no surprise to anyone since he has won this tournament several times.

The award for combined weight of five fish initially was split between two teams — Chad Hagie (Falls Lake Ranger II) with Mike Edmonston (Wildlife Officer), and Paul Donnelly (Falls Lake Superintendent I) with Keith Martin (Pilot Mountain Ranger III).

Weighing a sixth fish broke the tie. Chad and Mike won the pot for the largest combined weight of six fish.

Everyone else won when they came back to Falls Lake the next day for the cookout. All the crappie caught the previous day were filleted and cooked. Winners didn't escape the work preparing and cooking the fish. The secret prize



FALLS LAKE RANGER KEITH MARTIN, LEFT, AND SUPERINTENDENT PAUL DONNELLY FILET THE CATCH.

for catching the biggest fish must have been doing most the preparation work for the cookout.

Floyd mixed the batter and cooked the crappie and also helped Paul, Keith and Chad fillet the fish. Scott Daughtry (South District Superintendent) helped cook hushpuppies. The cookout brought out a couple of other familiar names. Robert Skinner (retired Administrative Officer) and his wife, Patsy, and Leon Carter (former State Maintenance Supervisor) also attended.

LET US KNOW . . .

IF YOU'VE GOT A STORY

IDEA FOR THE STEWARD

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Mission

The mission of the North Carolina Division of Parks & Recreation is:



to protect North Carolina's natural diversity;

to provide and promote outdoor recreation opportunities throughout North Carolina;

to exemplify and encourage good stewardship of North Carolina's natural resources

and

for all citizens and visitors of North Carolina.

The Steward

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